

OUTGOING MESSAGE

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CLASSIFICATION
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MESSAGE HANDLING INDICATOR

DATE-TIME GROUP

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EAST ASIA BRIEF 111-74.4

3. MEXICO: THE ALL-OUT HUNT FOR GUERRILLA LEADER LUCIO CABANAS HAS TURNED UP NOTHING AFTER THREE WEEKS. THE SEARCH, INVOLVING ABOUT 2,000 ARMY TROOPS AND UNITS FROM THE OTHER TWO MILITARY SERVICES, WAS LAUNCHED IN AN EFFORT TO KILL CABANAS AND RESCUE SENATOR RUBEN FIGUEROA, THE GUBERNATORIAL CANDIDATE KIDNAPED BY CABANAS ON MAY 30. THE GOVERNMENT MOUNTED THE OPERATION, CONCENTRATED IN THE HIGH SIERRA NORTHWEST OF ACAPULCO IN GUERRERO STATE, AFTER RECEIVING RANSOM DEMANDS FROM CABANAS THAT IT TERMED "IMPOSSIBLE" TO MEET. //GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS HAVE EXPRESSED LITTLE HOPE THE ARMY WILL FIND FIGUEROA ALIVE. SOME ARMY OFFICIALS BELIEVE THAT CABANAS MAY HAVE LEFT THE AREA DURING THE NEARLY FOUR-WEEK PERIOD BEFORE TROOPS WERE SENT IN.//4

PRESSED BY THE FIGUEROA CASE TO COMMENT PUBLICLY ON THE COUNTRY'S GUERRILLA PROBLEM, ECHEVERRIA AND OTHER GOVERNMENT SPOKESMEN HAVE FALLEN BACK ON ANSWERS CLOUDED BY LONG-ESTABLISHED MEXICAN "REVOLUTIONARY" TRADITIONS AND MYTHS. GUERRILLAS ARE NOT WORKING FOR REVOLUTIONARY INTERESTS, ECHEVERRIA SAYS, BUT ARE TRYING TO PROVOKE REGRESSIVE TENDENCIES.